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MEMOIRS

OF THAT

CELEBRATED COMEDIAN,

And very singular GENIUS

THOMAS WESTON.

——— "I knew him well;
"He was a Fellow of infinite Humour."

SHAKESP.

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M,DCC,LXXVI.

MEMOIRS, &c.

BIOGRAPHERS have in general agreed, that in writing the Hiſtory or Life of any perſon; nay, even Memoirs, it is abſolutely neceſſary to give the moſt minute account of his or her birth, parentage, education, and a long train of etceteras; ſome indeed begin with their birth, and tell how, when juſt born, it caſt its eyes upon its dada, and ſingled him out from amongſt the whole ſet of goſſips; others again tell ſuch trifling and puerile ſtories of the behaviour of their hero or heroine, while in petticoats, that the patience of the reader is often tired before the child has got from ſchool.

We ſhall not cloſely follow this general rule, however tyrannical faſhion or cuſtom may be, but let our readers know juſt as much as may be neceſſary for the better being acquainted with our hero, who for many years has ſhone unrivalled in his ſtage excellence, and ſcarce ever was eclipſed by a greater oddity than himſelf.

Mr. THOMAS WESTON was the ſon of Thomas Weſton, Eſq; firſt cook to his Majeſty King George the Third; the ſalary and emoluments of which place were fully ſufficient to enable him to live as a gentleman, and give his ſon an education, wherein he was inſtructed in all the polite accompliſhments. Nothing remarkable however occurred worth noticing during his very boyiſh days; when he grew up to about ſixteen years of age, he ſeemed to have a particular liking to the ſtage, at the repreſentations of which he was very often preſent: by frequenting the houſes where the actors uſually reſort to, he ſoon became acquainted with ſeveral of them, and alſo with a number of young ſpouters: theſe laſt

laſt introduced Tom to their clubs, which were at that time uſually held at the Horn in Doctors Commons, the Queen's Arms, Newgate-ſtreet, and the Queen's Head, in Duke's Court, Bow-ſtreet.

Our hero was exceedingly pleaſed at this introduction, and the happineſs he had in view of figuring away in a ſpeech among his ſpouting acquaintance. Tom begged to be received a member of the ſociety, which was granted him, and with the greateſt pleaſure he laid down his five ſhillings towards buying a curtain, ſome clothes, lamps, candles, and decorations. Tom now ſtudied very hard till he made himſelf maſter of the Tent Scene in Richard the Third, and the battle with Richmond; and when perfect, put down his character upon the liſt (as they took it by turns) for performance; when the night came, his heart beat, his face fluſhed, and he owned he was as much afraid as a performer, for the firſt time, on a Theatre Royal, or Mr. Kelly, at the firſt repreſentation of any of his pieces: he, however, received the applauſes of all

the company—tokens of the hand they always ſhewed to young beginners to encourage them, as they ſaid, (for applauſe is the nurſe of merit) though they all agreed his acting was execrable, and his voice no ways adapted to the ſtage. He was quite hoarſe before he had gone through half the firſt ſcene; he however was pleaſed with his own performance, whatever other folks might think of it, which he has frequently told his friends ſince, and indeed his future conduct proved it. At the play therefore, and the ſpouting clubs, he generally ſpent his evenings, and the day in ſtudying of new parts and ſcenes.

Mr. Weſton (his father) had not, as yet, obſerved any thing in his ſon's behaviour to give him cauſe to ſuſpect his obedience and perfect reſignation to his will; he therefore procured for him the place of *Turnbroach*, (Turnſpit in Engliſh, for they ſtill retain the French appellation) in the King's kitchen, worth about thirty pounds a year: it is executed by a deputy, who is paid about ſeven or eight pounds a year, and which place

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our hero poſſeſſed till his death. He got him alſo appointed a clerk under the clerk of the kitchen, and Tom made a jaunt in the yatch with the late King to Holland, in his way to Hanover, as part of his houſehold, which was on a very different footing then to what it is now. Lord Talbot was not at that time ſteward: the rats and mice did not go about the palace with tears in their eyes: the ſpits did not lie by and ruſt, and a fire was to be ſeen in all the kitchen chimnies.

On Tom's return from Holland, he began to conſider himſelf more of a man, (having ſeen the world); his buſineſs now became reſtraint, and he often neglected it; frequent complaints were made to his father, who gently chid him for his remiſsneſs, which he conſtrued into ſeverity: ſome words aroſe between them, and the ſon, inſtead of minding his father's advice, gave his paſſions their head, and intirely by his miſconduct, incurred his diſpleaſure; and indeed his behaviour was too notorious to paſs over. His days were moſt-

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ly ſpent in bed, to repair the reſt which he loſt by ſetting up all night, frequently getting into quarrels and diſputes, which ſometimes ended in being ſent to the watch-houſe, from whence his father was more than once obliged to bail him, and enter into recognizances for his future good behaviour.

The father ſaw, with grief, the vicious behaviour of his ſon; he ſaw it, and endeavoured, by every endearing means, to reclaim him, but all in vain; his pleaſures had taken ſuch deep poſſeſſion of his ſoul, that nothing could change his purpoſe. He heard his father's remonſtrances againſt his exceſſes, and indeed promiſed amendment; but as ſoon as he left his preſence, he forgot his word, and ruſhed into the very ſame follies. A continuance of this behaviour, as may naturally be expected, tired his father's patience, and ſomething he thought muſt be done. For buſineſs he was no ways fit; for even the ſmall attendance required of him at the palace, he neglected: and after ſome conſideration, the navy was thought

thought of, and mentioned to our hero, who having contracted ſome debts, and no diſlike to the ſea, thought, by complying with his father's propoſal, he ſhould have them paid, get ſome new clothes, and money in his pocket; with great ſubmiſſiveneſs he thanked his father for his care of him, aſſured his parent he would endeavour, by his future behaviour, to blot out of his remembrance his manifold faults, and prove himſelf worthy of the name of his ſon.

Mr. Weſton, ſen. immediately procured a recommendation for his ſon to the late Sir John Bentley, who juſt at that time was appointed to the command of the Warſpite, a fine 74 gun ſhip, juſt launched at Deptford, and then rigging and fitting out for ſea; and he was accordingly accepted as a midſhipman. Tom's uniforms were made; he put on his ſword and cockade, and ſtrutted a few days among his acquaintance in Covent Garden: ſoon however he was ordered on board, which he complied with, for it was ſomething new to him; he repaired to the ſhip with his cheſt, and was ſhewed down

down to the Orlop among his meſſmates. He thought it rather queer, he has ſince often ſaid, to be ſtewed up in a damned hole, worſe than a night cellar, with no light all day long, but from candles, to eat his meat off a trencher, with a ſea cheſt for his table, and lie in a bag (for ſo he called the hammock): when the ſhip got into Long Reach, he began to be tired of his new occupation, and ſigh for his old acquaintance and the ſpouting clubs; a thouſand ſchemes he thought of to get out of the ſhip, but none ſeemed likely to ſucceed; he knew he could not leave her by fair means, as orders had been given by Sir John for none of the young gentlemen to go on ſhore on any account, without his particular permiſſion.

Day after day Tom revolved in his mind how to get on ſhore, for the ſhip now ſeemed like a priſon to him; he had been three weeks on board, eat up all the ſtock that he had brought, and drank up all his liquors, with the aſſiſtance of his meſſmates, (for he was never niggardly)

and therefore he had nothing now to amuſe him; the quarter-deck was but a ſhort walk, and he had counted a thouſand times how many ſteps it was from the gangway to the cabin-door. He thought his genius cramped, and forgot in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time all the promiſes he had made to his father. A project at length ſtruck him that ſeemed to wear an appearance of ſucceſs: he had a friend who was a clerk at the War-office, to him he wrote an account of his ſituation, and his earneſt deſire of quitting it upon the firſt opportunity, as the ſhip would ſoon ſail for Portſmouth, and there it would not be ſo eaſily effected. The plan he laid down to his friend was to write a letter as from the War-office, to ſeal it with the office ſeal, and direct it to him on board his Majeſty's ſhip Warſpite, in Long-Reach, acquainting him that a commiſſion in the army was preparing for him, which he was deſired to come up to London in order to receive. This letter was ſhewn by him to Sir John Bentley, who, not doubting the truth of it, gave him leave to go on ſhore; but at the ſame time

reminded him that if he did not obtain it he muſt not fail to come on board again immediately, which he very gravely promiſed Sir John he would; and after taking leave of his meſſmates, without cheſt or baggage, he jumped into a Graveſend boat, and took a final farewel of Sir John, the ſhip, navy, his cheſt and bedding, thinking his liberty of more worth than all.

As ſoon as our hero reached London, he bethought himſelf of his cheſt, which, by an artful letter that he ſent on board, he received ſafe; his wants he knew would very ſoon demand the neceſſary ſupplies which its contents could furniſh. Home he was certain was no place for him, his father's diſpleaſure he was ſure was unconquerable, therefore he did not attempt it. He now gave a full range to his paſſions, and, thinking himſelf his own maſter, indulged his every inclination: But in a ſhort time he found his wardrobe decreaſe apace, his caſh was ſoon gone, and he had begun to borrow on his clothes for preſent ſubſiſtance; he dined upon a waiſtcoat, went to

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the play and ſupped upon a ſhirt, and breakfaſted upon a ſtock and pair of ſtockings; he was therefore afraid in a fortnight's time he ſhould eat up the cheſt and all its contents: Something was of courſe to be done, he looked round him for ſome eligible means of ſubſiſtance, and, after a few moments thinking, concluded on the ſtage. He had attended the theatre for upwards of three years, and the ſpouting clubs the ſame period of time, and could not perſuade himſelf but that he ſhould deſerve, and indeed receive, a very comfortable living from his theatrical talents. The iſſue proved the truth of this ſuggeſtion, but the reader will perhaps be ſurprized when he is told that Mr. Weſton placed all his hopes, notwithſtanding his voice and figure, on his ſucceſs in *tragedy*: 'Tis ſtrange, yet very true, and all his playwright friends could not divert him from his partiality for *Melpomene*. His figure he was ſure could be no objection, at leaſt not a ſolid one; *Garrick*, he ſaid, was ſhorter by near an inch, and as to his voice, he fancied he had powers: but enliſt he muſt, his friend the

wardrobe ſaid, for he had no more ſupplies to get from the bottom of the cheſt, and could not meet with any credit either from a taylor or any other tradeſman; he accordingly applied at his uſual houſe of call, the Black Lyon in Ruſſell-ſtreet, and there found a vacancy in the celebrated Oliver Carr's company, which at that time was at Endfield. Carr's company was well known to all the playwrights for many years, it had made lines of circumvallation round London, and occaſionally pitched its tent at every town, village and hamlet within twenty miles about this metropolis. Tom ſaw the managereſs, for tho' Oliver was dead, and his wife kept the company, it ſtill went in Oliver's name; ſhe ſaw Tom, and received him a member immediately. Things worth nothing are very ſoon to be had—the ſharing was ſo ſmall that no one could *live* on it but the manager. Tom now was no œconomiſt, ſo it will be eaſily gueſſed what he did when he joined the company.

Tom muſtered his little remains of clothes and found that his wardrobe was almoſt on his back; he had only two more ſhirts and a pair of ſtockings at the waſherwoman's, an old hat that had the lace cut off and ſold, a pair of breeches, and eke a pair of old boots, together with his ſea-cheſt. He hated always being incommoded, ſold therefore his cheſt, old breeches, and hat, paid his waſherwoman, which he was obliged to do before he could get his linen, and ſat out on foot with a young lady who was bound on the ſame errand with himſelf. New performers are always indulged with what characters they like beſt for a trial part: Tom choſe Richard, and made a very queer figure in it indeed. His opinion of the ſtage when he had played this part was very different from what he entertained of it when he ſpouted a ſcene or two at the club in Doctors Commons, or at the Queen's Head in Duke's-court; he found that a good pair of lungs, with a powerful voice, were abſolutely neceſſary for tragedy, and tho' he knew this, yet nevertheleſs he imagined there was a great deal

deal in uſe, and that in time he ſhould make it much eaſier to himſelf, for he had got hoarſe before the third act was ended. He conceived there was a great deal of ſtage trick in old actors which might be acquired, and with ſuch reaſoning he quieted his doubts concerning his abilities as a tragedian. The next night, however, was determined for the opening of his fair companion who walked with him to Enfield; ſhe had choſen Mrs. Sullen, and Scrub being wanted, he very readily undertook the part, and indeed acquitted himſelf with very great applauſe: Every one was in raptures with him but *himſelf*; he thought there was a dignity in tragedy which raiſed an actor to much higher conſequence than her ſiſter *Thalia* could poſſibly do. He could not be talked out of this opinion, tho' Mrs. Carr the next morning when ſhe gave him his ſhare (which amounted to *three ſhillings and ſix-pence*) told him that he had intirely miſtaken his *fort*. Young man, ſays ſhe, you ſhould by all means think of low comedy, you may make a figure in that, but, believe me, in trage-

dy you have no hopes at all. Tom gave her an arch look, ſaid nothing, but, like the parrot, *thought the more*, and even continued his notions of tragedy, tho' the boys followed him as he went along, ſaying, *there, that's him that play'd Scrub t'other night.*

To three different towns did Tom go with mother Carr, in which time his benefits and ſharing, put together, did not amount to five ſhillings per week. 'Tis not to be ſuppoſed he could ſubſiſt on ſo ſmall a ſum; in truth he did not, but left a number of chalks at each place, beſides a ſmall part of his wardrobe.

At length, being reduced to the ſhirt on his back, he thought it was high time to march, leſt he ſhould have never a one, and accordingly took up his ſtaff and returned to London, fully determined at any rate, if poſſible, to be received into favour with his father, having in his mind thought of a friend who had ſome influence over him. He came, however, to town, got an or-

der for the play, to which he went, and there met an old ſcool-fellow who had married a girl with ſome money and was full of caſh. Tom liſtened with pleaſure to his ſtory, and gave a ſigh at the end of it, an explanation of which was deſired by his friend; but Tom told him the place was inconvenient: They therefore adjourned from the play, when it was over, to ſupper, where Tom diſh'd up his ſtory as well as he could, which his friend heard with great affection, and at length lent, or rather gave, Tom five guineas to make himſelf a little comfortable, and fit to ſee his father.

The five guineas Tom had got changed his thoughts from going home; tho' the laſt company he was in was but poor, there were others he knew where a comfortable livelihood might be had, together with a good benefit; he therefore laid out for an engagement, looking upon himſelf (from the little knowledge he had gained) of more conſequence than when he firſt embarked. Fortune was kind to him, he got an offer

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to join a company about fifty miles from London, and the manager gave him half a guinea for his journey, the uſual allowance being at the rate of a guinea for an hundred miles, and alſo the payment of the carriage of the performer's things; but as to the laſt, Tom did not put the company to expence; he went an outſide paſſenger in the ſtage, and had all his things in a hat box, which went carriage free.

He joined the company in good ſpirits, ſaw a tolerable theatre, and ſome ſort of regularity, and again was for ſhining in tragedy; the manager did all he could to perſuade him to the contrary, but in vain; at length he inſiſted on the contrary, and the reſt of the performers thinking their intereſt might be hurt with regard to the receipts of the houſes, joined in what the manager ſaid, and he was fain to comply, and therefore played Scrub with great approbation: he however perform'd (as players in the country are ſervants of all work) ſeveral parts in tragedy during the ſeaſon, but met with no kind of ſucceſs in his attempts, which he attri-

buted to the want of judgment in the audience, being well aſſured he knew his own *fort* better than any one elſe.

In moſt country (or ſtrolling) companies, the members form a kind of partnerſhip or commonwealth, and all ſhare alike; but the manager for his trouble, care, and finding clothes and ſcenes, &c. is intitled for the ſame to four ſhares, which are called *dead ones*. He manages, fixes the plays, is treaſurer, and ſhares the money, after paying bills, ſervants, lights, carriage of goods from town to town, erecting buildings, and all manner of incidental charges, and is to keep a book, wherein they are to be ſet down for the inſpection of the company. This, the manager of Tom's company omitted, and therefore divided the receipts of the houſes as he thought proper, always complaining that he was in advance. Tom thought himſelf ill uſed, and took upon him to be ſpokeſman for his brethren, who all promiſed to back him. One morning at rehearſal, he inſiſted upon ſeeing the ſtock book, (for ſo it is called) the manager aſk'd him

him "if he meant to pay the debt which the company owed." Tom anſwered, "he had a right to ſee it, whether or not." Words therefore aroſe between them, and the manager told him, to cut ſhort the matter, he ſhould play no more with him, (an argument generally uſed by raſcally managers, when performers want to know more than they chuſe to let them). The reſt of the performers who had promiſed to *back* him, only turned their *backs* on him, and ſlunk away terrified at the manager's ſentence, leſt it ſhould be their lot alſo. Tom gave him a hearty damn, and leaving the company directly, ſteered his courſe to a ſmall troop which was but twenty miles off.

The buſineſs with this company was worſe than Mrs. Carr's, when he firſt ſat out, not but the manager was very honeſt, for indeed there was nothing to cheat the company of. The receipts of the houſes did not much more than pay the incidental charges; Tom therefore made away with almoſt every thing he had. One of the

performers, with whom he lay, was juſt in the ſame dilemma; they were each of them reduced to a ſhirt a piece, and which they were ſome time conjuring how they ſhould get waſhed; at length they ventured to ſend them, and went a whole day without one, having only a handkerchief tied about their necks. The waſher woman had promiſed them on the next evening, as they wanted them for the ſtage; but in the morning they were ſadly diſtreſſed, their landlady uſually came in for money to provide breakfaſt; it occurred to them therefore that they had the ſleeve of an old ſhirt, which Tom put on; and both lying in bed, he ſtretched out his hand and gave the old woman the money to provide neceſſaries. This ſtory of the ſleeve he has often humorouſly told to his acquaintance, never making any ſecret of the diſtreſſes he had been in, but rather taking a pride in diſcloſing them. He however quitted this company the very day after his benefit, by which he cleared five and twenty ſhillings, and ſat off for London, with all his wardrobe on him.

Tom's

Tom's arrival was lucky: *Yates* and *Shuter* had taken a booth in Bartholomew Fair, and he got engaged with them for the time it laſted. Here he paraded, (that is, ſhew'd himſelf between every performance to the mob in his ſtage dreſs, in a gallery erected before the booth) and played nine times a day for a guinea. The money he got ſat him a little upon his legs, and by means of a friend, he was engaged at Foote's, in the Hay-market, but in a very low caſt of playing; for even at the coming out of the *Minor*, in the year 1760, he only played DICK: he now met with an agreeable young lady, a milliner in the Hay-market, whom he courted and married, but by whom he never had any children: ſhe appeared at Foote's theatre in Lucy, in the Minor, and promiſed, with care, to make a tolerable actreſs; her *forte* was in ſinging and ſentimental comedy.

At the end of Foote's ſeaſon he engaged himſelf and wife at Norwich, and ſtaid ſome time with that company on a good ſalary; he returned again however to the Hay-

Hay-market, and play'd *Jerry Sneak*, which ſtamped him a favourite with the public. *Moſſop*, at the end of this ſeaſon, beating up for recruits for Dublin, Tom joined his troop, and exhibited in Ireland, though not with the ſucceſs which was ſuppoſed; he would have ſtaid longer, had it not been for his engagement at the Hay-market, and therefore returned he with a reſolution of never ſeeing that country again, at leaſt, he ſaid, not whilſt he could live in England.

He went one ſeaſon with *Johnſon's* company to Chicheſter, Saliſbury, &c. and here words aroſe between him and his wife, which cauſed a ſeparation: ſhe complained of his brutality, and he of her extravagance and diſobedience. Mrs. Weſton continued on the ſtage in the country, and died about two years ſince at Sunderland, where ſhe was playing. She lived with a Mr. Price, an actor in the ſame company, by whom ſhe had ſeveral children.

Tom,

Tom, at the cloſe of this ſeaſon, in the Hay-market, got an engagement at Drury-lane at a ſmall ſalary; he play'd there during Mr. Garrick's abſence in Italy, *Abel Drugger*, and 'tis ſaid, excelled every one who play'd that part. He ſaw himſelf now in poſſeſſion of three pounds a week at that theatre, and ſo began to conſider his appointments larger than they were; though a good ſcholar, he was no great arithmetician; he could eaſily *tell* his receipts, but could not *count* his expences. He now began to get *behind the lighter*, and therefore to learn œconomy, took a young lady into keeping at apartments at a glaſs ſhop facing St. James's place, in St. James's ſtreet. This fair one he brought out at the Hay-market in Cherry; but his behaviour did not agree with her notion of things, and not readily putting up with the affronts ſhe daily received, he looked out for one who would ſuit his purpoſe better, (for he could not bear to be alone); in one of his midnight frolicks, ſauntering home from the Black Lion about one o'clock with his friend *Dick Hughes*, as great a genious as himſelf,

ſelf, and famed for hopping an hour upon one leg without changing. His dexterity in getting up a brick wall is well known in the King's Bench, where, being a priſoner, and refuſed leave to walk out one day in St. George's fields, he fairly made a ſhift to get up on the inſide, and down on the out; and coming to the turnkey, laughing, told him he ſhould return again before it was dark. This gentleman was a fovourite crony of Tom's, and ſerved him often in good ſtead; for liquor always made Tom ſaucy, and ſtep much beyond the rules of good manners and decency, which frequently brought him into ſcrapes, and would have procured him a ſound beating, but that *Hughes* had the prudence to heal the breach he had made, in politeneſs, and ſettle the matter with his antagoniſts without coming to blows, which would have moſt aſſuredly turned out to Tom's diſadvantage, as he was not, from his ſize and ſtrength, ſufficient to combat the general run of men.

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But to return to our ſtory; as they were coming home one night, or rather morning, they met in the ſtreet with a couple of Dulcineas, whoſe garb did not promiſe any great things: they entered into converſation, and Tom being very amorous was, with his friend Hughes, conducted by theſe fair ones to their apartments in Mutton-lane, (the bottom of Leather-lane, Holborn) a moſt deſirable ſituation, being ſurrounded with dunghills, pig ſtyes, ſlaughter houſes, and many other equally as agreeable *neighbours*: they ſpent the remainder of the night (morning we ſhould ſay) with theſe *angels*, and on day-light appearing, (for they all went to bed in the dark) Tom ſeemed to be pleaſed with his bargain: ſhe was about ſixteen or ſeventeen, ſeemingly in the bloom of health, with a very good face and perſon, though rather coarſe.

His lodgings and lady in St. James's ſtreet were now intirely diſcarded, (though he owed her much love and tenderneſs for the care ſhe had taken of him during the time they had been together) and he took up

his reſidence at Mutton-lane with his new enamorata. His ſalary at Drury-lane, though three pounds per week, was pawned to the managers for money advanced to his creditors, who had been obliged to take *diſagreeable* means; he therefore did not receive above half, on which he and his demoiſelle were obliged to ſubſiſt. In this ſituation he felt ſome diſtreſs; for the pittance he received on the Saturday, was owing before it came for lodging, (for they had *no faith)* chandler's ſhop, public houſe, &c. and yet, notwithſtanding his ſituation, he would frequently neglect the rehearſals, and ſometimes even abſent himſelf the night of performance: a continuation of this behaviour obliged Mr. Garrick to diſcharge him from the theatre.

When he found the *treaſury* ſhut againſt him on the following Saturday, he began a little to reflect on his condition: he for once examined his affairs, and found himſelf, upon enquiry, accompanied by four of the moſt diſagreeable companions a man could well have. *Imprimis*—he was deep-

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ly in debt, and expected every moment to be arreſted. Secondly, he had no money for preſent ſubſiſtance, nor knew where to get any. Thirdly, he was violently afflicted with a ſcorbutic complaint, which not only affected his face by breaking out in blotches in a very diſagreeable manner, but alſo his legs, one of which had a hole in it that diſcharged a very great quantity of matter, that was not only offenſive to himſelf, but to every one about him. And fourthly, a young miſtreſs to ſupport, who was no greater œconomiſt than himſelf. In this dilemma, he ſcarce knew how to proceed; at length, preſſed by his neceſſities, he ſent to his old friend and acquaintance B——ter, and another belonging to Drury-lane theatre, to lay his caſe before the company, and beg of them to make a collection for him.

When Tom's circumſtances and diſtreſsful ſituation were made known, Mr. Garrick forgot his anger, and, with Mr. Lacy, ſent him a preſent ſupply, and received him into the theatre again. When their bene-

volence reached him, he had neither hat nor waiſtcoat to wear; he had even been obliged to part with them to buy himſelf abſolute neceſſaries. He returned however to his duty, and a night was fixed for his benefit, at which Miſs Platt was to ſell tickets; but when the day before his benefit arrived, he did not appear at the houſe, and of courſe no bills were printed for his night, nor was there any play, ſo that the company loſt one day's ſalary that week by his caprice, or whatever was the cauſe of his not taking his benefit. The truth was, it happened late in the ſeaſon, the weather was extremely hot, and he imagined there would hardly be charges, and indeed he conſidered himſelf as ill uſed, on account of the late appointment, ſuppoſing from his ſalary he had a title to an earlier night.

Mr. Foote, who on every occaſion was his very good friend, mentioned his caſe to ſeveral of the nobility, and a ſubſcription was ſet on foot for him, and ſeventy pounds ſubſcribed, to go towards paying his debts. This ſerved to ſtop ſome gaps, though Tom took

took care to have a part of it, by giving a friend a couple of notes of hand, which he compounded for, and returned Tom the money he received for them, which he ſpent jovially, laughing at the trick by which he had purchaſed his pleaſure.

The paying however of his debts, ſerved only to furniſh him with the means of encreaſing the number of his creditors; they heard the ſtory how his trades people were paid, and therefore doubted not, if they truſted him, but they ſhould eaſily get their money, or ſecurity for it; beſides, he never haggled about the price, and of courſe they could afford to run a little riſque, with a large profit in view. He took lodgings at Newington, in Surry, not far from the alms houſes; and before even the Summer ſeaſon was over, could never ſhew his head in public, unleſs on a Sunday. He ſtole into the theatre when he was wanted, by a way that few would have thought of. The doors in the Hay-market were always beſet. The back way by Mr. Foote's houſe, in Suffolk-ſtreet, was not ſafe, he therefore went into

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the Tennis Court, in James-ſtreet, and getting out at the top of that building, entered the theatre by the window of the upper dreſſing rooms, which adjoined to the Tennis court, and this road he purſued a whole ſeaſon unſuſpected; his old friend, Dick Hughes, always going before as an advanced guard, to ſee if the coaſt was clear.

During this ſeaſon Mr. Foote took a leaſe of the Edinburgh theatre for three years of Mr. Roſs, at ſix hundred pounds per annum, and the managers of Drury-lane not ſending to Tom, he entered into an agreement with Mr. Foote for Edinburgh at five pounds per week; (at this time he had an hundred guineas for the Hay-market ſeaſon, which amounted to about the above ſum); but to prevent any diſagreeable viſitors, (for there were a number of people who wanted to ſee him) he took up his reſidence in the theatre during the ſhutting up of the Hay-market, and the ſetting out for Edinburgh, which theatre does not open before the firſt or ſecond week in November.

During this receſs he kept cloſe priſoner, except on a Sunday; uſually after dinner, as the dreſſing rooms wherein he lived were rather dark and dull, he brought a table into the lobby of the theatre next the Haymarket, and ſhutting to the half door which had ſpikes on the top of it, took the air and ſmoaked his pipe, without fear of catchpoles: once indeed he was outwitted by one of them, whoſe face he was unacquainted with: he came to the hatch over which Tom was looking, and having ſome clothes covered with green cloth like a taylor, aſked if Mr. Foote was at home; Tom, not ſuſpecting the cheat to be on him, anſwered yes, and opened the hatch, where, as ſoon as the bailiff entered, he acquainted our hero that he had a writ againſt him. A thought immediately ſtruck Tom, who not ſeeming ſhocked, told the officer to follow him in, and Mr. Foote would ſettle it, either by paying the money, or giving ſecurity: unſuſpecting, he followed Tom to the paſſage, which then led to the ſtage behind the ſide boxes, and was very dark; the bailiff groped ſlowly along, but Tom knowing the

the way, ſoon got to the door (which had ſpikes alſo to it, and bolted it) then croſſing the ſtage, went through Foote's houſe into Suffolk-ſtreet, leaving the catchpole to lament his credulity. As he had not touch'd Tom, it could not be called an eſcape; ſo when the coaſt was clear, he returned to his uſual reſidence, but was never after off his guard.

Before, however, Tom ſet off for Scotland, Mr. Foote obtained leave for him of the Chamberlain for the repreſentation of the Minor at the Hay-market, in which he himſelf play'd Mrs. Cole, and Weſton Tranſfer: this brought Tom an hundred and eighty pounds, and put him a little upon his legs. The managers of Drury-lane, by their treaſurer, ſent him in a demand of upwards of an hundred pounds which he owed them; but Tom took no further notice of this letter, than to ſet out ſomewhat ſooner for Edinburgh, for which he embarked in a veſſel in the river bound to Newcaſtle, with his Lady and a Toad-eater, who was to be wardrobe keeper: from Newcaſtle he took

took chaiſe, and arrived in the metropolis of Scotland, where he opened in Sharp, and was exceedingly well received, unlike the people in Ireland, (for he play'd the ſame part there the firſt night); he was conſidered as the beſt Comedian they had ever ſeen, and at his benefit they proved their regard for him.

When the ſeaſon was over at Edinburgh, which is always the beginning of April, never laſting more than five months, he returned to England, and ſtopping at York, play'd there a few nights in ſome of his moſt celebrated parts; yet ſuch was the partiality of the people of that city to a low Comedian of the York company, that on a compariſon of his playing Scrub with Weſton's performance of that part, they ſaid they could not perceive greater excellence in our hero, than Mr. Robertſon, (for that was his name): he here met with his old friend Dibble Davis, who having left Covent Garden, had been a twelvemonth with Wilkinſon's company at York, and elſewhere; he therefore joined Tom, and they went over to Leeds, where

they alſo played and had a benefit, after which, as it was too ſoon for the Hay-market ſeaſon, they entered into a ſcheme of tantaragiging *(i. e.)* giving an entertainment, conſiſting of prologues, epilogues, and ſome detached ſcenes from plays and farces.

By the above means they got a few pounds, and together with Tom's lady and the toad-eater (the Taylor) they returned to the Hay-market, where Tom made up the breach that ſubſiſted for ſome time paſt between Mr. Foote and Davis, who was engaged thereby, and the enſuing ſeaſon, by recommendation of Mr. Foote, got back to Covent-garden.

Though Mr. Foote met with a reception much greater than any performer who had ever been there before, yet he thought the journey too great for the profits. It was too far, he ſaid, for any man, but much more ſo for him who had but one leg: he therefore diſpoſed of the remainder of his leaſe

leaſe to Mr. Bland, who, with Mr. Digges, is now in poſſeſſion of it.

By the interpoſition of Mr. Foote, a reconciliation enſued between Tom and the Drury-lane Managers; terms were agreed on both ſides: they were, that Tom ſhould have five pounds a week, and furthermore, twenty ſhillings for the lady, who called herſelf Mrs. Weſton. In fact, they only gave him money to pay themſelves, for half was ſtopped to diſcharge the debt he owed them.

The encreaſe of his ſalary cauſed only an increaſe of demands on him; he thought himſelf richer than he really was, though it muſt be owned he had now a very handſome income. His ſalary at Drury-lane, allowing for playing thirty-two weeks, amounted to one hundred and ninety-two pounds. This, with his ſalary at Foote's, and benefit (the only perſon there indulged with one) and alſo his night at Drury-lane, could not, in the whole, be eſtimated at leſs than ſix hundred pounds per annum;

but then it must be considered he was in arrear with both the Managers, and the old scores must be wiped off,—of course he did not receive his whole salary, yet nevertheless lived as if he had; by which means he was always behind hand.

Without considering his finances, he gave a loose to his inclinations; he commonly went in debt where credit could be had, and his ready money therefore served him for pocket expences, and where they had no *faith*. In the purchase of any thing he seldom disputed the price, unless they talked of ready money, and then, as Sharp says, they seldom had his custom: for example, he bought a chaise and horse, almost without examining it, for five-and-twenty pounds, which he sold, three months afterwards, being in want of a few guineas, for less than seven pounds, though indeed it was the full value of them both, on account of the little care that had been taken of them whilst they were in his possession.

Debts were therefore coming continually upon him now, and the Managers of Drury-lane had more than once releaſed him when in limbo; but the frequent repetitions of his arreſts obliged them to reſolve to have no more to do with them, whatever might be the conſequence. One day, when his name was in the bills, he was *borrowed* by a Marſhalſea-court officer, for a ſmall debt, which being unable to diſcharge, he ſent to the Managers, who refuſed to comply with his requeſt. Tom being known to the officers, he prevailed on them to go to the play with him that night, and with them placed himſelf in the front of the two-ſhilling gallery; when the play was to begin, a performer came forward, to make an apology for Mr. Weſton, that being ill, he could not poſſibly attend, and therefore hoped the audience would accept of another perſon to play his part. On this Mr. Weſton got upon the bench in the gallery, and ſpeaking out aloud, ſaid, it was intirely falſe, that he was not ill, that he was ready to do his buſineſs on the ſtage, but that at preſent he was in the cuſtody of a couple

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of bailiffs, for a ſmall debt, which he had ſent to the Managers the ſaid morning to give ſecurity for, that he might have his enlargement, and they had refuſed, and that he ſubmitted the whole to the conſideration of the audience.

Tom's trick had its effect, the Managers ſent for him out, and the matter was ſettled; it however makes the old ſtory good, that *one man may ſteal a horſe better than another look over the hedge*; had almoſt any performer done what he did, they would have been immediately expelled the theatre, and probably found it hard to have got an egagement in any theatre in England.

To prevent the like accident in future, he had apartments allotted him in Vinegar-yard, which communicated with the theatre, and here he lived during the winter ſeaſon. Tom ſeldom felt any inconvenience from confinement, he had always company with him to ſolace with, and gin and purl he thought a ſpecific for every care. He would generally lie in bed almoſt twenty

hours

hours out of the day and night, talk, drink, and dine in it; and were it not for the offices of nature, would perhaps have not got up from Monday morning till Saturday night, when he uſually ſallied forth and commonly, by ſome extravagant prank, made up for the other ſix days; though on them he was far from being an œconomiſt. His ſtomach was but trifling, yet he loved dainties; and though he did not eat the ſize of a lark, he would ſend for a turkey at any time to pleaſe his palate. He was in general more expenſive in his eating than drinking; gin and purl, with ſometimes punch or port wine, contented him; yet he would eat peaſe at a crown a quart, and green geeſe at 7s. 6d.

During his reſidence here, he was violently afflicted with his old diſorder, the ſcurvy. His face was quite encruſted with a ſcab, by the matter which diſcharged from the pimples; his leg too broke out again, and the ſore emitted a pus which ſmelt very diſagreeably; he tried ſeveral things which were preſcribed him, but in vain,

vain, and now began to reflect ſeriouſly on his affliction, which prevented him from doing his buſineſs on the theatre. One day talking of his caſe, a friend mentioned to him ſome drops that were advertiſed, called *Maredant's Drops*, that had done remarkable cures in ſcorbutic caſes. Tom, on his friend's recommendation, ſent for a bottle of them, and thought he found benefit; and continuing them a while, recovered ſurpriſingly; his face began to ſmooth and look healthy, his leg to diſcharge a more laudable matter, and incline to heal; but he purchaſed this alteration in his health at the expence of his liquor; when therefore he found himſelf pretty hearty, and getting well apace, he had not patience to wait for a perfect cure, but going out one Saturday night, gave a looſe to his inclinations, which had been fettered while taking the drops, and forgetting all that had been ſaid to him, plunged deeply into exceſs, and by one drunken bout, had nigh ſhortened his life ſome years.

No advice whatſoever was ſufficient to keep him for any conſiderable time without his dear friend, the Pot, or the bottle; every thing elſe was ſacrificed to it; for he would even, when he had not money, ſend his coat to the pawnbrokers for the means of purchaſing it, rather than be debarred of that ſatisfaction.

His eſtimation as a comedian, was now at its zenith, (though it never abated afterwards during his life) his benefits were always conſiderable; he therefore drove the ſettlement with his creditors off till thoſe nights arrived, when he frequently, notwithſtanding the largeſſes of the public, obliged them to have a little more patience. Theſe delays commonly cauſed actions, which perhaps with giving the officer civility money, and the law charges, ſometimes amounted to near as much as the whole debt. So negligent was he of his affairs, that he has bail'd an action, and afterwards let judgment go by default, incurring thereby a very heavy charge. 'Twas by this, and ſuch like affairs, that it may

very truly be ſaid that he paid in the whole not leſs than an hundred and fifty pounds for every hundred he had; ready money he knew was an article very hard to be come at, and therefore he was loth to pay away any but at thoſe places where no truſt was to be had.

His benefit, at the end of the ſeaſon, at Drury-lane, proved a very beneficial one, with which he ſtopped ſome pretty large gaps; and coming out from his hiding place, took a neat houſe and garden in the ſtreet leading up from the bridge at Chelſea, which he furniſhed and lived in till about half a year before his death, when he ſold or removed moſt of the goods, for the landlord ſeizing for rent about two months ſince, found only one bed in the whole houſe, with a number of bird cages and empty bottles in every room of it.

At Chelſea he meant to regulate his affairs and live decently. This was what he had often propoſed, though never could put it in practice; his reſolution was not firm enough

enough for ſuch an undertaking; and as he before always had done, he did ſo now—gave into exceſs.

Though he had often ſmarted for the conſequences, yet nothing could deter him, neither his health nor reputation bore any weight with him, the pot or bottle was always on table, and the duns at the door. Though the receipts from Drury-lane and the Hay-market amounted, with his benefits, to near ſix hundred pounds per annum, yet he engaged with Jefferſon at Richmond to play every Saturday at that theatre, Mr. Foote not performing on that day. Here he received the emoluments of a benefit, which turned out very profitable, though in the end he was a loſer by the engagement, as he ſtaid at Richmond Saturday night, ſometimes Sunday and Monday, till his buſineſs called him to the Hay-market.

In theſe tours he would expend a great deal of money; his girl went with him, and always ſome crony; for, like his betters, he had always a hanger-on, who muſt

alſo be provided for, and the bills at a tavern or inn could not be very trifling, wherever he came.

Liquor, from whence he derived his greateſt pleaſure, proved his greateſt curſe; during even the performance of a part he muſt have a dram; and as the ſervants of the theatre were forbid providing any, Tom generally brought it himſelf. One evening coming to the houſe very late, Mr. Foote met him juſt as he entered the ſtage door, at his houſe in Suffolk-ſtreet, and after a ſlight reprimand for his delay, aſked him what he had in his hand under his coat. Tom ſaid, a bottle of Seltzer ſpaw water, which the doctor ordered him to drink. Mr. Foote ſuſpecting it was gin, inſiſted upon taſting, and Tom as peremptorily refuſed; at length the manager's deſire was complied with, and the contents of the bottle proved Holland's gin, as was ſuſpected; on which, he threw it on the ground, broke the bottle, and ſpilt its contents. Our hero immediately ſwore he would not play that evening, unleſs it was

replaced, and Mr. Foote was forced to comply with his demand, or diſmiſs the houſe, as he remained inflexible to all manner of advice.

Some diſputes now aroſe between him and his friend Hughes, a ſeparation enſued, and one Major Douglaſs (a man who had been a ſerjeant major in the guards, and therefore retained the name of major) was entered as his *bully back:* he was his cook, his valet, his butler, his ſteward, his dreſſer; in ſhort, he was his *fac totum*, and nothing was done without the *major*. Tom could not have made a better choice, as the major was of ſuch a ſize that he could, with eaſe, have carried Tom home at his back at any time that he had taken a cup too much. 'Tis ſaid, however, that this poor fellow has met with ſome diſaſter, as he left Tom on ſome account about three months ſince, and has not yet been heard of.

In the following winter he was again obliged to keep cloſe, and once, when ſent for

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to the theatre at Drury-lane, he returned for anſwer, that unleſs the managers would pay two hundred pounds for him he could not poſſibly attend the houſe, and moreover added, that unleſs ſome things were compromiſed almoſt immediately, that the following week he ſhould want five hundred pounds to clear his way to the theatre; and yet, notwithſtanding this behaviour, Mr. Garrick, from his very great merit, forgot the man for the actor. He played now the game of hide and ſeek continually with his creditors, and often came not to rehearſals, on account of the bailiffs, and yet when he fell into their hands he always found means to gain the managers over to his ſide, to advance the money, or give ſecurity for the payment.

His health now began very viſibly to decline; numbers of his friends told him this melancholy truth, but he commonly laughed it off with a joke, or ſeemed regardleſs when death ſhould make his appearance; though four months of the ſeaſon had elapſed when he died, yet he had played during that time,

time, but very few nights; he never appeared to have very great ſpirits, and during his illneſs had leſs than might have been expected from one of his way of thinking. He was attended by ſeveral eminent perſons of the faculty, but his inſide was perfectly deſtroyed—alleviation was all they could do for him, and like the glimmering of an expiring taper, he lived ſome weeks, but nature at lengh, quite worn out (like the foundation of a fabric) at length gave way, and the manſion fell to its parent earth. In fine, he died on the 18th day of January, 1776, univerſally regretted as an actor, and as a man, within the ſmall circle of his acquaintance, all of whom have reaſon to deplore his loſs, for he was good-natured even to a fault, and would ſhare with an acquaintance the laſt ſhilling he had; every thing was in common to his friend, nay, even his bottle, and though in public company he was no ways entertaining, yet in private with his companions he was ſocial and gay; he rather choſe his acquaintance beneath than above himſelf, he hated reſtraint, and therefore ſeldom mix'd where

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he might reaſonably expect to find it; tho' he was generally in debt, yet it did not proceed from the badneſs of his principle, but a want of œconomy in the management of his affairs, which he never properly attended to; and according to the faſhionable phraſe, he may rather be ſaid to have *murdered* his money than have *ſpent* it; in fine, if we balance his good qualities with his bad ones, we ſhall only ſay of him as of many more of mankind, there are better and worſe than he was. His funeral was conducted in a decent, yet genteel manner; he was conveyed in a hearſe and four, attended by two mourning coaches, and buried in his kindred's vault, where ſleeps his father, mother and his brother.

Mr. Weſton's character as a low Comedian, undoubtedly ſtood unrivalled; the ſtage has not his equal, nor perhaps ever had, unleſs we allow that *Nokes*, an actor towards the latter end of the laſt century, may be put in competition with him; indeed from the account *Cibber* gives of him (whoſe judgment of the ſtage is to be relied

lied on) he ſeems to have been a performer of equal merit; their talents appear to run in ſuch exact parallel lines, that the following character of Nokes would almoſt do for Weſton.

"His natural countenance (ſays Cibber) was grave and ſober, but the moment he ſpoke, the ſettled ſerioufneſs of his features was utterly diſcharged, and a dry, drolling, or laughing levity, took ſuch full poſſeſſion of him, that I can only refer the idea of him to your own imagination; in ſome of his low characters that became it, he had a ſhuffling ſhamble in his gait, with ſo contented an ignorance in his aſpect, and an aukward abſurdity in his geſture, that had you not known him, you could not have believed that naturally he could have had a grain of common ſenſe."

Such was *Nokes*, and ſuch we may nearly ſay was *Weſton*, and what was rather ſingular, ſuch was not any other actor between the dates of their reſpective times.

Weſton, on his firſt attachment to the ſtage, had his *genius*, like many more of his profeſſion, counteracted by his *inclinations*; the former confeſſedly pointed out to him low comedy, the latter, from motives natural enough in a young man, ſolicited him to purſue tragedy, and the agreeable rakes in comedy; Horace's never-failing rule, *naturam expellas, &c.* however very fortunately for himſelf and the public, brought him back to the true and original bend of his genius, not before he had very nearly received the contempt of the public in his *artificial* characters. Mr. Foote deſervedly has the credit of his theatrical *regeneration*. This great comic genius ſaw through Weſton's *real* abilities, and judged ſo critically the extent of his line of acting, that he wrote the character of Jerry Sneak, in the Mayor of Garret, purpoſely for him. How Weſton ſucceeded in this, as well as in all others of the ſame caſt afterwards, muſt be recollected, and which we decline attempting to deſcribe.

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Though Weſton's walk, as we have before obſerved, was low comedy, yet even this line was very narrow; the particular he excelled in, being that of a *dry, vulgar ſimpleton*, but in this we will venture to aſſert, that he has not left his equal on the ſtage. In his Sneak, Drugger, Teſter, Scrub, &c. he exhibited ſo palpable a ſimplicity of nature in his perſon, voice, and manner, but more particularly in his face, that contrary to all other actors we have ever ſeen, the longer and more intenſe we looked at him, the more he ſeemed to confirm us in the opinion that he was not an actor, but the real perſon he repreſented; nay, he at times ſupported this deluſion in a manner ſo peculiarly his own, that in thoſe ludicrous diſtreſſes which low comedy occaſionally affords, he ſeemed to feel ſo piteous a puſillanimity, that after the burſts of our laughter were over, we conſidered within ourſelves, whether we ſhould not pity him in turn.

Grimace has often ſupported our beſt comic actors; *Shuter* owes much to it, yet by

his happy management, the ſoureſt critic will ſcarcely ſuſpend his laugh to take notice of it; nay, even Mr. *Garrick, that God of Stage Idolatry*, has frequently drawn upon this *clap-trap* for applauſe. Weſton was always ſuperior to it; the playing of his character was ſo chaſtely conceived by him, and ſo naturally ſtamped upon his face, that like the *ſombre* colouring of a maſterly portrait, he derived all his merit from the *truth of his profeſſion*.

Mr. WESTON's WILL.

ONE afternoon, a few weeks before Weſton died, ſeeing a pen and ink upon the table, he ſaid to a friend who was ſitting with him, "if you'll write for me I'll make my will," which his friend accordingly did, and Tom dictated in the following manner:

I THOMAS WESTON, Comedian, hating all form and ceremony, ſhall uſe none to my will, but proceed immediately to the explaining my intentions.

Imprimis. As from Mr. Foote I derived all my conſequence in life, and as it is the beſt thing I am in poſſeſſion of, I would, in gratitude at my deceaſe, leave it to the ſaid Mr. Foote, but I know he neither ſtands in need of it as an author, actor, or as a man; the public have fully prov'd it in the two firſt, and his good nature and humanity have ſecured it to him in the laſt.

Item.

Item. I owe ſome obligations to Mr. Garrick, I therefore bequeath him all the money I die poſſeſſed of, as there is nothing on earth he is ſo very fond of.

Item. Though I owe no obligations to Mr. Harris, yet his having ſhewn a ſincere regard for the performers of his theatre, (by aſſiſting them in their neceſſities, and yet taking no advantage thereof, by driving a Jew bargain at their ſigning freſh articles) demands from me, as an actor, ſome acknowledgment, I therefore leave him the intire poſſeſſion of that ſatisfaction which muſt naturally reſult on reflecting, that during his management, he has never done any thing baſe or mean to ſully his character as an honeſt man, or a gentleman.

Item. I having play'd under the management of Mr. Jefferſon, at Richmond, and received from him every politeneſs, I therefore leave him all my ſtock of prudence, it being the only good quality I think he ſtands in need of.

Item.

Item. I give to Mr. Reddiſh a grain of honeſty: 'tis indeed a ſmall legacy, but being a *rarity* to him, I think he will not refuſe to accept it.

Item. I leave Mr. Yates all my ſpirit.

Item. I leave Mrs. Yates my humility.

Item. Upon reflection, I think it wrong to give ſeparate legacies to a man and his wife, therefore I revoke the above bequeſts, and leave to be enjoyed by them jointly, *peace, harmony and good nature.*

Item. Notwithſtanding my illneſs, I think I ſhall outlive Ned Shuter; if I ſhould not, I had thoughts of leaving him my example how to *live*, but that I am afraid would be of little uſe to him, I therefore leave him my example how to *die.*

Item. I leave Mr. Brereton a ſmall portion of *modeſty.* Too much of one thing is good for nothing.

Item.

Item. As Mr. Jacobs has been a long while eagerly *waiting for dead mens ſhoes,* I leave him two or three pair, (the worſt I have,) they being good enough in all conſcience for him.

Item. Though the want of vanity be a proof of underſtanding, yet I would recommend to my old friend Baddeley to make uſe of a little of the firſt, though it coſt him more than he would willingly pay for it.—It will encreaſe not only his conſequence with the public, but his ſalary with the managers; but however, ſhould his ſtomach turn againſt it, as nauſeous, he may uſe for a ſuccedaneum a ſmall quantity of *opinion,* and it will anſwer the purpoſe as well.

Item. Mr. Quick has long laboured to obtain the applauſe of the public—the method he has taken is a vague one; the ſureſt method to obtain his end is to copy *Nature.—Experientia docet.*

Item.

Item. Miſs Younge has had ſome diſputes with the Managers, about dreſſing *her tail*, complaining of the want of fringe, as fringe ſeems to be an abſolute requiſite in the ornamenting ladies tails, and I always loved to ſee them as they *ought to be*; I leave her therefore the *fringe about* the flaps of my waiſtcoat, in which I uſually play'd Jerry Sneak.

Item. As I would not forget my friends, particularly old ones, I leave Charles Banniſter my portrait, to be taken when I am dead, and to be worn about his neck as a memento to him, that regularity is, among the moſt certain methods, to procure health and long life.

Item. Dibble Davis claims ſomething at my hands from the length of our acquaintance, I therefore leave him my conſtitution; but I am afraid when I die, it will be ſcarcely better than his own.

Item. I leave to the ladies in general, on the ſtage, (if not the reality, yet) the ap-

 pearance

pearance of modeſty: 'twill ſerve them on more occaſions than they are aware of.

Item. To the gentlemen of the ſtage, ſome ſhew of prudence.

Item. To the authors of the preſent times, a ſmattering of humour.

Item. To the public, a grateful heart.

Here his voice failing him, he told his friend he would finiſh it as the next day, and bade him put it into his pocket, which he did; but Tom left it, as he did all his promiſes of amendment, only juſt begun.

The following Lines are offered as tributes to his Memory.

EPITAPH

On Mr. THOMAS WESTON, Comedian.

ALAS! poor Tom has tumbled off the perch,
And left his gay Thalia in the lurch;
Once high he ſtood upon the Comic Pinnacle,
But when he ſlipp'd fell—Scrub—Sneak—Laſt, and Binnacle.

EPITAPH

On the late Mr. THOMAS WESTON.

OR on the ſtage, or in the world's great play,
Fill well your parts, ye old, ye young, ye gay,
Here lies full proof that Nature will decay.

EXTEM-

EXTEMPORE,

On the Death of Mr. WESTON.

THE mould where Nature ſat impreſs'd on,
Death has defac'd by conquering Weſton.

EXTEMPORE,

Suppoſed to be ſpoken by Mr. FOOTE.

SUCH loſſes as theſe pray who can with-
ſtand?
To loſe firſt my leg, and then my *right hand.*

On the Death of Mr. THOMAS WESTON, Comedian.

HIS ſtool trip'd up, down fell poor Doctor
Laſt,
The beſt muſt fall when once the die is caſt.